DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 383 201 FL 023 000

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TITLE Bilingualism and Testing: A Special Case of Bias.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-89391-775-3
PUB DATE 94
NOTE 265p.
AVAILABLE FROM Ablex Publishing Corporation, 355 Chestnut Street, Norwood, NJ 07648 (clothbound: ISBN-0-89391-774-5; paperback: ISBN-0-89391-775-3).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Books (010)

EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Achievement Tests; *Bilingualism; *Cognitive Processes; Court Litigation; Diagnostic Tests; Individual Differences; Intelligence Tests; *Language Role; Legal Problems; Measurement Techniques; Occupational Tests; Personality Measures; Psychometrics; Research Needs; Special Education; *Standardized Tests; *Test Bias; Testing; *Testing Problems; Trend Analysis

ABSTRACT

Issues in the testing of bilinguals are examined, particularly in the context of poor results attained on standardized tests by bilingual children. Discussion begins with an examination of definitions and classification of bilingualism, citing some evidence of confusion in use of terminology. Causes for this confusion are seen in popular misconceptions and measurement deficiencies. Research that has explored the relationship between bilinguals and cognitive complexity is then reviewed and four types of testing (intelligence, achievement, personality, and vocational) are explored in greater detail. A section is devoted to discussion of diagnostic testing, especially with regard to special education. Both legal and psychometric issues are addressed here. The final chapter outlines three options for testing bilinguals: minimizing the potential harm of using existing standardized tests with circumstantial bilinguals; temporary abolishment of standardized test use with circumstantial bilinguals; and development of alternative approaches to testing and assessment. Issues in assessment of competency are noted. An essay making recommendations for research on bilingualism and testing is appended. The book contains a substantial bibliography, author index, and subject index. (MSE)

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